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1939/40

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Director of Vehicles and Traffic
of the
District of Columbia

1939 - 1940

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To the Commissioners:

The following pages state briefly the work and accomplishments of this department for the year ending June 30, 1940.

TITLES AND TAGS

During the year, there were 84,522 titles issued, of which 3,046 were duplicate titles and 2,487 were issued to the District or Federal Government free of charge. A total of 3,886 more titles were issued this year than last year.

The volume of registrations decreased 5.6% below the total for the preceeding year. A total of 191,767 registrations were handled, of which 159,358 were new registrations and 32,409 were transfers. In addition there were 4,409 duplicate registrations and 2,456 duplicate tags issued.

OPERATORS' PERMITS

70,087 examinations were given to persons who applied for an operator's permit. 59,334 passed the examination and 10,753, or 15.4% failed. These examinations included 21,123 road tests.

A total of 72,627 operators' permits, new and renewals, good for a period of three years, were issued. In addition, 6,561 duplicate permits were issued and 14,429 persons obtained learners' permits.

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The Board of Revocations and Restorations of Operators' Permits reports the following:

Revocations and Suspensions

Drug Addict	15
Epileptic	2
General Record	185
Leaving After Colliding	46
Mental Disorder	31
Negligent Homicide	17
Operating a Lottery (automobile involved)	9
Physically Incompetent	1
Reckless Driving	117
Revocation of Privilege of Non-resident	195
Speed, 1st offense	266
Speed, 2nd offense	204
Speed, 3rd offense	16
Traffic Fatalities (Grand Jury)	5
Traffic Fatalities in other States	5
Traffic Records in other States	42
Colliding	17
Obtaining Permit by Misrepresentation	6
Unauthorized use of motor vehicle	10
Total	1189

Bd Rp 1939/40 cont'd 1940

Blacklist

Drug Addict	90
Other Traffic Offenses	156
Total	246

The following number of operators' permits were restored monthly as follows:

Restored

July - 1939	78
August	91
September	95
October	77
November	107
December	98
January - 1940	56
February	54
March	84
April	75
May	67
June	68
Total	955

The number of cases referred to the Board for action totaled 9,810. Of this number 1,189 were suspended or revoked.

There were 8,621 cases which were considered by the Board to be of such a minor nature as to warrant no action being taken toward the

revocation or suspension of operators' permits. Of this 8,621 cases, 2,205 were for minor offenses committed by District residents in other States. The vast majority of cases, which were either reported by the local courts or the Police Department in which no action was taken, were arrests for first offense speed.

The Board, during the fiscal year, held 1,571 public hearings, as compared with 1,550 in the previous year.

BOARD OF REVOCATION AND REVIEW OF CHARACTER LICENSES

The number of hearings held by the Board during the year total 1,283.

The action taken by the Board is classified as follows:

Rejections.....	580
Approvals.....	349
Revocations.....	42
Suspensions.....	218
Restorations.....	29
Warnings.....	54
No action.....	11
Total	1283

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DIVISION

During the year this Division acted on 877 cases. The operating and registration privileges of 877 persons were revoked or suspended. Revocations and/or suspensions were for the following causes:

1. Driving while under the influence of intoxicating liquor

District of Columbia..	184
State of Maryland.....	160
State of Virginia.....	103
All other States.....	37
	484

This is 48 convictions less for this offense than the total for the previous year.

2. Leaving the scene of an accident where personal injury occurs.

District of Columbia.....	9
All other States.....	1
Total	10

This is 11 less convictions for this offense than the total for the previous year.

3. Judgments

District of Columbia.....	350
All other States.....	33
Total	383

This is an increase of 103 over the previous year.

333 persons had their privileges to operate and register motor vehicles revoked. In all cases of restoration the individual was required to file bond or insurance with this department in the amount of $11,000. At the same time the rights of 130 persons were revoked for failure to renew insurance.

1045 certificates of liability insurance were filed during the year. Of this number 737 were owners' policies and 308 were operators' policies.

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTION DIVISION

From July 1, 1939, to July 1, 1940, this division made 306,726 vehicular inspections, which include all vehicles approved first appearance; all vehicles rejected first appearance; and all vehicles reinspected and approved. In this number of inspections, 206,261 vehicles were involved, of which 85,055 were approved first appearance and 117,643 were rejected first appearance, or 58.02% of all vehicles presented were rejected for one or more of the 39 items mentioned on the inspection card.

A total of 3561 vehicles were not returned for approval. These have either been removed from service or have been sold or registered in other States. Twenty-three vehicles received CONDEMNED stickers as being unsafe for operation.

This division has been the means of checking the validity of drivers' permits and has discovered many operators operating with expired permits and hundreds operation with unsigned permits; it has materially aided the Metropolitan Police through their records in tracing ownership of stolen or abandoned vehicles; it is aiding the Traffic Survey Program by taking all speedometer readings of vehicles presented in order that a yearly mileage may be ascertained.

Meetings are conducted by this division, after working hours, for the many local garage and service organizations in order that their personnel may better understand the methods of inspection and the tolerance of inspection standards.

The division, through its constant contact with the motoring public, is distributing such safety and safe driving literature that is available. It has been represented at citizens' association meetings and safety societies where representatives of the division have presented the advantages and problems of this important safety work.

There has been compiled and published by this division 2,000 copies of a 78-page Manual which contains the procedure and schedule of the Inspection Program. These Manuals have been distributed to fleet operators, garage and dealer organizations, public libraries, institutions of learning, and to many State and municipal governments that have sent in written requests for the publication.

Approximately 17,000 letters have been received requesting information regarding inspection routine; others requesting extension of time dates; others registering complaints; and many of a congratulatory nature. A total of 199,135 notification post cards has been mailed at a cost of $1,991.35.

PARKING METERS

The experimental installation of parking meters, authorized by Congress, proved very beneficial in the improvement of parking conditions in the congested area where they are located. Inasmuch as these meters became, after the experimental period, the permanent property of the District of Columbia, full responsibility for their maintenance was absorbed by the Department of Vehicles and Traffic.

Therefore, in order that these meters would give complete operating satisfaction and perform all their intended functions, it was necessary to secure the services of one employee whose duties were to keep a constant check on all meters in an effort to detect any weak points and to repair all faults, failures or damage to the mechanisms.

These meters required servicing for various causes, ranging from nickels jamming due to overfull coin boxes, to broken main springs to a complete meter being stolen. The number of service calls were as follows:

Mechanical failures..... 356
Malicious damage..... 338
Accidental damage.....1386

Of the accidental damage cases 1183 were caused by nickels jamming due to overfull coin boxes.

146 meters were checked for accuracy of operation upon complaint from motorists as to the duration of the parking period, in order that the Police Department could render a fair decision on the question of overtime parking. Five of these meters proved to have mechanical trouble and the tickets issued for overtime parking were cancelled.

Parking meters have proved their value as an aid to the solution of the short-time parking problem. Approximately 1,000 additional meters are needed. However, it must not be forgotten that parking meters along the curbs are temporary and future traffic demands may force the abolition of all curb parking in the business district. Therefore, it is strongly urged that all receipts from parking meters be used to acquire and develop off-street parking facilities.

SIGN SHOP

The following is a list of the work of the Traffic Sign Shop during the fiscal year 1939-1940:

Class of Work	1940	1939
White lines painted on pavement (feet)	537,289	392,674
Yellow lines painted on pavement(feet)	43,981	57,935
Curbing painted white (feet)	18,239	672,407
Rope and cable placed and removed (feet)	13,515	159,825
Permanent signs placed	6,064	4,975
Permanent signs replaced	7,020	11,320
Emergency signs placed and removed	59,739	61,916
Special signs made up and placed	430	441
Lettering on street pavement jobs	28	76
Safety zone markers placed in pavement	595	447
Route markers placed	624	37
Snow removal signs placed-removed	4,500	4,500
Cherry Blossom signs placed-removed	350	350
Welcome to Cherry Blossom Festival signs	9	9
Signs lettered	21,733	27,847
Shrubs planted at Welcome signs	44	---
Plastic street markers installed	450	---
Safety program signs stenciled on sidewalk	4,797	---

The increase in footage shown for white lines painted on the pavement is probably because of the paint crew starting the paint work early in the morning when traffic is light.

The decrease in yellow line work is probably because of the number of concrete street car loading platforms established and to a decrease in relocation of painted zones.

The large decrease shown in the footage of white paint on curbs during the year is because during the fiscal year 1938-39 an extra force of men was employed for this work.

The decrease in the amount of rope placed this year over that of last year is because of a decrease in the number of parades, public functions, etc., during the year. It is expected that this work will increase considerably this year because of the Inauguration.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Following is a list of Traffic Light Signal Work completed during the fiscal year 1940.

Signal Installations, Fiscal year 1940

No.	Date in Service	Location	Paid for by Dept.	Number of Signals		Metropolitan Police Relieved for Other Duty	
				Traffic Lights	Neon Walk	Full Time Hours	Part Time Hours
1.	8-11-39	12th & Monroe Sts., N.E.	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.
2.	9-14-39	30th & Mass. Ave., N.E.	D.V.T.	3		None	
3.	9-17-39	13th & Pa. Ave., N.W.	D.V.T.	0	10	None	
4.	9-19-39	3rd & G Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	4		None	
5.	10-10-39	11th & S Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	5			3½ hrs.
6.	10-10-39	11th & Vermont Ave., N.W.	D.V.T.	6		None	
7.	10-10-39	11th & R Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	4		None	
8.	11-3-39	12th & Q Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	4		None	
9.	11-3-39	W. Gate White House on Pa. Ave.	D.V.T.	1			3½ hrs.
10.	11-7-39	2nd St. & Pa. Ave., S.E.	D.V.T.	4		None	
11.	11-7-39	6th & H Sts., N.E.	D.V.T.	4		None	
12.	11-7-39	9th & H Sts., N.E.	D.V.T.	4		None	
13.	11-7-39	10th & H Sts., N.E.	D.V.T.	4		None	
14.	11-8-39	19th, Va. Ave. & C St., N.W.	D.V.T.	2		None	
15.	11-10-39	Sherman Ave. & Harvard St. N.W.	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.
16.	11-10-39	Geo. Ave. & Harvard St., N.W.	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.
17.	11-10-39	Geo. Ave., Hobart Pl. & Col.Rd.	D.V.T.	6		None	
18.	11-17-39	E St., N.W., at 18th, 19th, 20th & 21st Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	16		None	
19.	11-28-39	17th, R.I. Ave. & Girard, N.E.	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.
20.	12-8-39	5th & H Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.
21.	12-8-39	12th & Eye Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	4		None	
22.	12-19-39	13th & S Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	4		None	
23.	1-5-40	13th & Harvard Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.

No.	Date in Service	Location	Paid for by Dept.	Number of Signals: Traffic Lights	Number of Signals: Neon Walk	Metropolitan Police Relieved for Other Duty: Full Time Hours	Metropolitan Police Relieved for Other Duty: Part Time Hours
24.	1-5-40	Sherman Ave., Park Rd. & Monroe St., N.W.	D.V.T.	8			3½ hrs.
25.	1-17-40	Ga. & Alaska Aves., N.W.	D.V.T.	8			3½ hrs.
26.	1-23-40	N. Capitol & Michigan Ave.	D.V.T.	3		None	
27.	1-23-40	17th & Benning Rd., N.E.	D.V.T.	4		None	
28.	2-20-40	Union Station Plaza and La. Ave	D.V.T.	4	10		2 officers 3½ hrs. each
29.	2-20-40	Union Station Plaza & Del. Ave.	D.V.T.	4	10	None	
30	12-28-40	12th & Michigan Ave., N.E.	D.V.T.	4		None	
31.	2-29-40	18th St., Fla. Ave. & U St. N.W	D.V.T.	11			3½ hrs.
32.	3-1-40	Pa. Ave. & Minn. Ave., S.E.	D.V.T.	6			3½ hrs.
33.	3-14-40	Thomas Circle, N.W.	Highway	5			3½ hrs.
34.	3-19-40	Thomas Circle, N.W.	Highway	0	38	None	
35.	3-26-40	23rd St., Va. Ave. & F St. NW	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.
36.	3-29-40	34th & Macomb St., N.W.	D.V.T.	4			3½ hrs.
37.	5-2-40	Wis. Ave. & Tenley Circle	D.V.T.	8			3½ hrs.
38.	5-6-40	Mass. Ave. & Rock Creek Trestle	Highway	8		None	
39.	5-29-40	13th & F Sts., N.W.	D.V.T.	0	8	None	
40.	5-31-40	17th & Park Rd., N.W.	D.V.T.	1			3½ hrs.
		Total		181	76	None	66½ hrs.

Other traffic light signal work completed during the fiscal year 1940:

1. 13th and Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. - One three light signal changed to a four light signal, one four light signal changed to a three light signal, one four light signal changed to a five light signal; also 10 Neon walk signals installed.

2. 14th and Irving Streets, N.W. - Moved the three light southbound traffic signal north to corner of the intersection so that it would be visible to pedestrians.

3. Conn. Ave. and Calvert St. N.W. - Replaced 2 three light signals with four light signals.

4. Sherman Ave. and Col. Rd. N.W. - Signal controller arranged as master for the new traffic light signals installed at Sherman Ave. and Harvard Street, Georgia Avenue and Harvard and at Georgia Avenue and Columbia Rd. N.W.

5. Virginia Avenue, 19th and C Streets, N.W. - 2 additional three light signals installed and controller changed from 2-way to 3-way.

6. Signals at Columbia Road, N.W. changed from isolated to flexible progressive and controller connected to the impulse cable of signal zone #7.

7. Signals at Thomas Circle revamped. 5 additional traffic signals and 38 Neon walk signals installed with the necessary controlling equipment connected to signal zone #1.

8. 13th and F Sts. N.W. - One three light signal changed to a four light signal, also 8 Neon walk signals installed.

9. 17th Street and Park Rd. N.W. - Changed one 3 light signal

to a four light and installed one additional 3 light signal.

10. West gate of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue installed one three light traffic signal to repeat the indications of the eastbound signal at Pennsylvania Ave. and West Executive Avenue.

11. 1st and East Capitol - Operation of signals changed from drawing T.S. 55 to T.S. 55A.

12. 1st Street, N.E., Constitution Ave. - Operation of signals changed from drawing T.S. 30A to T.S. 30B.

The following traffic light signals were changed to operate on colors 24 hours per day:

4th and Maryland Ave. S.W.
R.I. Ave. and 9th St. N.W.

Beginning January 20, 1940, the operation of the traffic light signals located in the general area south of Florida Avenue, between 1st and 32nd Street, N.W. and on upper 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Streets, N.W. were changed as an experiment to operate on colors until 2 a.m. and flash amber 2 a.m. to 7 a.m., instead of the usual operation of on colors from 7 a.m. to 12 midnight and flash amber 12 midnight to 7 a.m.

The following is a summary of traffic light signal installations and modifications in the District of Columbia for the fiscal years 1932 to 1940, inclusive:

Year	No. of Traffic signals in Operation June 30	No. of Additional signals Installed	No. of Signals Removed	No. of Signals Modified	No. of Neon Signals Walk	No. of Neon Signals Arrow	No. of Caution Blinkers	No. of Lighted Mushrooms	Metropolitan Police Officers Relieved for Other Duty: Street Railway	Full Time	Part Time
1932	932	23	38	70			15	31	-	-	-
1933	989	75	18	37			15	28	7	4	28
1934	1104	115	0	8			15	28	-	6	18
1935	1258	158	4	33			15	28	-	6	16
1936	1378	130	9	10			15	28	-	2	10
1937	1483	106	1	36		2	14	28	-	6	27
1938	1577	96	2	50			14	27	-	-	21
1939	1661	87	3	36	2		14	26	-	2	10
1940	1842	181	0	43	76		14	14	-	0	19
Total	1842	971	75	323	78	2	14	14	7	26	149

Total Number of Signals in Service June 30, 1940
Summarized as Follows:

District of Columbia	1750
National Capital Parks	23
U. S. Capitol	69
Traffic Light Signals in Service	1842
Neon Signals in Service	80
Total	1922

Other Installations

Circles	4	Draw Bridges	3
Friends School	1	Fire Houses	5
Total - 13			

Neon Signals Walk	
Union Station Plaza	20
13th & Pa. Ave. N.W.	10
13th & F Sts. N.W.	8
Thomas Circle	38
Friends School	2
	78
Neon Arrow	2
Total	80

District of Columbia	428
National Capital Parks	5
U. S. Capitol	16
Total No. of Intersections	449

There were 482 traffic signal trouble calls answered during the year. Forty timers and 19 time switches were overhauled. In addition, 3 timers were converted for the use of rush-hour offsets.

Pedestrian control using Neon lights was installed at 13th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., 13th and F Streets, N.W., Union Station Plaza and Thomas Circle. The trouble calls at these locations have been remarkably light despite the fragility of the Neon tubes and the complicated controls used for their operation.

A simple control system for the temporary Massachusetts Avenue trestle and the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Waterside Drive was developed and installed. This system by the use of signals gives the rush direction of traffic two lanes while the other direction is confined to one lane.

TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION

The best business minds of the world are practically unanimous in the opinion that it pays to advertise. Likewise the Congress of the United States viewed this subject in the proper manner when the sum of $7500 was appropriated for the District of Columbia to use as a Traffic Safety Educational Fund. The Department of Vehicles and Traffic, working in conjunction with a group of loyal Washington citizens, has during the past year expanded this amount for the purpose of stressing safe driving and safe walking in an earnest effort to reduce the fatalities and accidents in the District of Columbia.

The record for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1940, shows that there has been 9.2% less traffic deaths than in the preceding year. A

special drive has been made to reduce pedestrian fatalities and during this same period a reduction of 7.6% is the result.

The population of Washington is now 663,000. According to the records of the Department of Vehicles and Traffic the streets of the District of Columbia now carry approximately one car for every three residents. During the fiscal year 1939 there were 25,736 new cars sold in the District, and there were 23,804 new drivers' permits issued. The increased population and registration have increased the congestion and added new risks to those who traverse the streets. Hence, the need for eternal vigilance on the part of motor vehicle drivers as well as by pedestrians.

The Traffic Advisory Council, composed of 35 representatives of business and civic organizations, has been consulted as to the best methods of obtaining proper results. The Council approved a safety program which has been carried out by the Department of Vehicles and Traffic. This program included:

150,000 safety warnings attached to milk bottles calling attention to the opening of schools, distributed by the leading dairies.

1448 warnings painted on sidewalk intersections with the following wording: "Cross With the Green Light".

2349 warnings painted on sidewalk corners with the following wording: "Look Both Ways Before Crossing".

18 large welcoming signs erected at major entrances to the city calling attention to the speed limit and requesting proper observance of the same.

Cooperation with 54 gasoline filling stations by allowing posters to be displayed entitled: "Jaywalking Is a Short Cut to the Hospital".

The printing of 140,000 milk bottle covers reading: "School is Out - Watch Out", distributed by Washington dairies.

The printing of 110,000 pamphlets entitled, "Do You Know", giving detailed information as to the number of fatalities and accidents, and tables relating to the ages of pedestrians injured by cars. These were distributed to the schools, colleges, and to the Department's test stations.

The printing of 100,000 illustrated cards, entitled "School is Out - Watch Out". These were distributed through parochial and other schools, filling stations and Government departments.

3,000 blackboard strips 8" x 81" with a printed warning relating to the number of school children killed and hurt during vacation periods, distributed to schools and filling stations for display purposes.

80,000 copies of a pamphlet entitled, "The Beacon", distributed during the last week of school. This pamphlet carried messages from Superintendent Dr. Frank W. Ballou and Whitney Leary, Chairman of the Traffic Advisory Council, appealing to students of elementary grades to be more careful in the future when traversing the streets of Washington.

The purchase of 200 metal poster frames, 24" wide and 39" high. These were placed in parking lots, filling stations, and other prominent places in the city to be used in displaying semi-monthly safety messages to the public.

60 movie shorts of 100', conveying a safety message from Commissioner Melvin C. Hazen, Major Ernest W. Brown and Director W. A. Van Duzer

These were shown by the theaters and picture shows in and near Washington.

26,000 Safe Driving Manuals containing 53 illustrations and 43 pages of printed instructions are now available to the public and are being distributed through the various agencies of the Department of Vehicles and Traffic.

For a period of two months street cars and buses carried on a campaign which consisted of displaying warning cards with photographs of actual accidents, calling the public's attention to the necessity for caution to prevent fatalities and accidents. Likewise, for a period of three months similar cards were displayed on the outside of such buses and street cars giving proper warnings to pedestrians and operators of automobiles.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

In a single decade from 1930 to 1940 the population of the City of Washington increased from 487,000 to 663,000, or 36.2%, with corresponding increases in the Metropolitan Area. This increase is gratifying, but even more gratifying is the reduction in traffic fatalities. This year, despite the population increase, fewer persons were killed in traffic accidents than during any year since 1930. This fact in the face of national increases in traffic deaths testifies to the fruitfulness of our efforts.

Total traffic deaths this year amounted to 79, as compared with 87 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1939. This is a decrease of 9.2%. However, total accidents increased from 10,962 in 1939 to 12,075 in 1940, or 10.2%. As usual, most of the fatality victims were pedestrians.

Sixty-one, or 77.4% of the 79 deaths were pedestrians. The pedestrian is still the greatest offender in the traffic picture. The main actions of pedestrians which resulted in death may be listed as follows:

1. Crossing not at crosswalk
2. Stepped from behind parked car
3. Walking or playing in street
4. Crossing against the signal

We may combine these four and say that the pedestrian was in the street either at an improper time or place. This one thing was involved in 40 of the 61 pedestrian deaths.

The motorist must, however, shoulder his share of the blame and in 16 of the remaining 21 deaths, the motorist must assume entire blame. In these 16 cases the pedestrian was crossing at the proper time and place when struck.

TRAFFIC SURVEYS AND PLANNING

During the year the Engineering Division handled 1792 requests, complaints and suggestions from citizens or organizations of the District of Columbia and nearby areas. The majority of these are simple in nature, but many entail long and involved study before a fair decision can be reached.

The very small total of 127 intersection traffic counts were made. These counts, which reveal the direction, volume and hours of traffic density, are extremely important and the basic study for any traffic program, signal planning, parking problems and related subjects.

Two cross-town routes were laid out and marked this year. These routes guide people across the city without entering the downtown section to reach one of the U. S. highway routes traversing the city.

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Washington, because of its street plan, is a city of many unusual intersections. These intersections are confusing to pedestrians and motorists; are danger points and bottlenecks. In cooperation with the Department of Highways, plans for the channelization and simplification of ten of such intersections were drawn and the intersections revamped.

This part of the traffic program is something that can be seen and appreciated by every motorist and pedestrian, as it directly affects the ease of walking and motoring. The success of the changes at these ten intersections is attested to by the freer traffic movement provided and the large reduction in accidents.

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